

Education Measures for Vocational High Schools following Changes in the College Admission Test Policy

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This research was aimed at identifying measures to solve the problems arising from the changes to the college admission test policy, and at proposing a future direction of development for vocational education policy with regard to the newly introduced vocational high school admission test system. To attain the objectives of this research, the study attempted to achieve the following:

First, this research reviewed and analyzed the changes to the college admission test policy for vocational high school students as well as the important factors that have arisen as a result of these changes.

Second, this research attempted to understand the implications and tasks related to the college admission test policy for vocational high school students, which serves as an extension of the present vocational education policy, set to be implemented in 2004.

Third, this research attempted to predict the problems that might arise as a result of these changes, by investigating the understanding and reactions of the concerned parties to the newly introduced college admission test system, such as, vocational high school students and teachers, as well as those responsible for the admission test in colleges and universities.

Fourth, this research tried to suggest a future direction of development for vocational high school education, as well as the measures that should be taken to achieve this, by reviewing the opinions of the concerned parties, specialists, and policy makers.

To collect the data necessary for this study, this research used related literature, in-depth interviews with people engaged in the actual educational field, specialist conferences and consultations, as well as surveys.

With regard to the related literature, this research analyzed materials related to domestic and international admission test policies. These sources

were used as the basic materials in analyzing the present state, problems, and domino effect caused by this change in policy, and to suggest measures to improve the new admission test system for vocational high school students. In addition, conferences and consultations were held with vocational high school teachers, university professors, government officials from the Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development, city and provincial educational officers, as well as researchers from related government organizations and research institutes. A survey was conducted in order to investigate the concerned parties understanding, reactions, and preparations for this newly introduced admission test policy, and to understand their demands in order to establish educational measures for vocational high schools. Questionnaires were sent out by mail or directly distributed to 600 vocational high school students, 300 vocational high school teachers and admission test managers from 159 colleges and 192 universities. The questionnaire return rate was 97.0% for vocational high school students, 60.3% for vocational high school teachers, 58.5% for college admission test managers and 84.9% for 4-year university admission test managers.

As such, the educational measures for vocational high schools that should be taken as a result of the changes in the admission test policy for vocational high school students, can be summarized as follows:

- 1) When establishing vocational education measures, economic and educational motivation should be regarded as important factors.
- 2) Based on the possibility that this newly introduced admission test system for vocational high school students will help enliven vocational high school education, related vocational education policy should be established.
- 3) The new admission test system for vocational high school students should be operated nationwide in order to continuously develop vocational high school students aptitudes and interest.
- 4) Related vocational education measures should be established to invigorate the functions of the new admission test system for vocational high school students.
- 5) The new admission test policy should be implemented in a manner that

takes into consideration the roles of vocational high schools in educating the skilled human resources demanded by industries that have been hard pressed in the past to find such resources.

6) The new admission test system introduced for vocational high school students should serve as a catalyst for the achievement of a skill-based society promoted through higher-level vocational education programs.

7) Short- and long-term vocational education measures should be established, and consistently implemented in a manner that complements and improves the related policies.

Educational measures for vocational high schools should be separated into two different sets as a result of the changes in the admission test policy: one designed to stabilize the new admission test system and the other to develop vocational education that is based on these changes in the admission test policy.

Measures to stabilize the screening system that reserves 3% of admissions within each university program for vocational students who majored in related departments include the following:

1) Vocational high schools as well as city and provincial educational offices should promote the new college admission test system.

2) Vocational high schools and universities should take steps, both educational and institutional, to help vocational high school students enter university, through such means as the operation of a screening system that reserves 3% of admissions within each university program for vocational students who majored in related departments.

3) Universities should establish a fair and feasible screening system that reserves 3% of admissions within each university program for vocational students who majored in related departments.

4) With regard to the number of students that should be selected through such a screening system, universities should abide by this quota when the new admission test system is implemented. Afterwards, the number of students selected should be based on the prevailing state of affairs, such as, changes in universities admission test conditions or plans.

5) Universities should diversify admission test methods, and include an admission test based on related departments, in order to meet the objectives of vocational high schools and characteristics of the departmental majors.

6) Universities and policy makers should prepare measures to prevent students from getting confused when selecting related university majors in accordance with the present efforts being made by vocational high schools and universities to diversify the university majors selected by vocational high school students.

The measures to stabilize the vocation inquiry section can be summarized as follows:

1) Vocational high schools as well as city and provincial educational offices should prepare measures to stabilize the new admission test policy in a manner that does not interfere with the operation of the vocational high school educational curriculums.

2) With regards to the vocation inquiry section, universities should utilize their right to form their own career counseling programs. In addition, they should operate fair and feasible admission tests that do not discriminate against vocational high school students.

3) In order to successfully implement the vocation inquiry section, policy makers should focus on creating continuous interest in these vocation inquiry section and on establishing post-support programs (by taking such steps as properly defining the functions of these vocation inquiry section, and conducting a study on the proper range of questions needed to implement an admission test that is in accordance with the characteristics of specialized subjects).

4) In order to properly implement admission tests, policy makers and administrative institutions should reorganize or reestablish vocation inquiry section in order to cope with the changes and demands of the industrial world, including the establishment of measures to evaluate students skills and techniques.

The core measures needed to invigorate the new admission test policy and vocational education can be summarized as follows:

1) Concerned parties should use these changes in the admission test policy to invigorate vocational education. More specifically, there is a need for the principals of elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as the directors of education related agencies to display leadership in order to increase awareness of the new admission test policy and invigorate vocational education.

2) Based on their own characteristics and conditions, universities should implement higher education programs so as to become either academic based universities or vocational skill based universities. In addition, various lifelong education systems should be established to create a correlation between vocational high school and university education, through such steps as extending the cooperation-based education system, and encouraging students to enter departments related to their high school majors.

3) City and provincial educational offices and policy makers should prepare vocational education measures to help industries secure the manpower needed from vocational high schools. It is necessary to review the link model that connects vocational high schools industries universities industries by providing scholarships to students who desire to continue their academic path.

4) College and policy makers should prepare measures to boost 2-year college programs, which serve as another source of vocational education in Korea.

5) College and policy makers should establish measures to overcome the gap between 2-year college and 4-year university curricula and between urban and rural universities, which currently run the risk of becoming even deeper as a result of the changes to the admission test policy.

6) It is necessary for policy makers to make sure that the college admission test policy is implemented in a manner that assures that the vocational abilities of regular high school students are recognized.

7) Policy makers should consider various methods of establishing a qualification system for college scholastic ability tests.